

remove direct threats to the American people. Our actions in Iraq will increase our safety for years to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:01 a.m. on October 10 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Shirin Ebadi

October 11, 2003

The United States congratulates Shirin Ebadi on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize—a first for an Iranian and for a Muslim woman. The prize recognizes her lifetime of championing human rights and democracy. I strongly support the Iranian people's aspirations for freedom and their desire for democracy. The future of Iran must be decided by the people of Iran. Americans look forward to the day when a free Iran stands as an example of tolerance, prosperity, and democracy in the Middle East and around the world.

Proclamation 7720—Columbus Day, 2003

October 10, 2003

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

When Christopher Columbus set out from Spain in August 1492, he launched an era of discovery and exploration that continues today. On Columbus Day, we honor this Italian explorer's courage and vision, and recognize his four journeys to the "New World."

One of the first known celebrations of Christopher Columbus' achievements was in 1792 when a ceremony in New York City celebrated the 300th anniversary of his land-

ing in the Bahamas. Italian Americans began regularly honoring Columbus in the 1860s. In 1892, President Benjamin Harrison issued a Presidential proclamation on the 400th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage, describing Columbus as "the pioneer of progress and enlightenment." The United States now celebrates a national holiday in honor of Columbus.

Columbus' willingness to sacrifice the comfort of his home to pursue the unknown has inspired generations of daring explorers. Through the years, Americans have followed in the spirit of Columbus through exploration of land, sea, and space, and are fulfilling Columbus' great legacy. Since the days of Columbus, millions of Italian immigrants have crossed the ocean and come to the United States. These Italian Americans and their descendants have made America stronger and better.

In commemoration of Columbus' journey, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934, and modified in 1968 (36 U.S.C. 107), as amended, has requested that the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 13, 2003, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 15, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 16.

Remarks at a Columbus Day Celebration

October 13, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated. *Grazie*, Antonio. [Laughter] Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to join you in observing Columbus Day and to celebrate Columbus Day in the District named after Christopher Columbus.

The journey of the explorer from Genoa is one of the great stories of daring and discovery. And the journey of millions of immigrants from Italy is also a story of discovery and bravery, and that journey has enriched our country. That's really what we're celebrating today. America is a stronger and finer nation because of the influence of Italian Americans.

The veterans of America are better off as a result of the influence of Tony Principi, the Secretary—[applause]. He's really done a good job, and I'm proud of his commitment and service to our country as a Cabinet Secretary. I value his advice. I love his spirit. I'm also happy to report that, like me, he married well. [Laughter] And Liz is with us today, as is Captain Tony Principi, a captain in our Air Force who is celebrating his 30th birthday today. So happy birthday.

Members of my team are here. I want to thank them for coming—Roy Bernardi, who is the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development at HUD, and I'm glad Alice is with you. Thanks for coming, Roy. You're doing a great job—former mayor of Syracuse, I want you to know. Pat Harrison is with us, Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs. Dana Gioia, who is the Chairman of the National Endowment of Arts and is doing a great job. Thank you for coming, Dana. I appreciate it.

As you know, one of the things our Nation is doing right now is we're leading the fight against AIDS, particularly on the continent of Africa. One of the generals in the fight against AIDS is Tony Fauci from the National Institutes of Health. Thank you for coming. That would be Dr. Tony Fauci, a great man.

We've got Members of Congress with us today. First of all, the Senator from the great State of Wyoming, Mike Enzi. Thank you for

coming, Senator. And Ginny Brown-Waite, from the—Congresswoman from Florida. Ginny Brown, thank you for coming, and I'm glad you brought Harvey along too. Thanks for coming, Harvey.

Stefano Stefanini, Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of Italy, thank you for coming, sir. Give my best to my friend Silvio Berlusconi, who I'm close to, and I value his leadership and friendship, always such a joy to see him. So please pass on my very best.

Frank Guarini is here, who is the Chairman of the National Italian American Foundation, former Member from the great State of New Jersey. Frank, thank you for coming. Phil Piccigallo is with us, the national executive director of the Order of Sons of Italy is with us. Thank you for coming, Phil. Frank Caperino, the National President of UNICO National, is with us today. And thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here.

For nearly 70 years, our country has celebrated in honor of Columbus. And on this day, we celebrate the contributions of Italian Americans. You're among the many millions who claim Italian heritage, and you can claim that heritage with pride. And I know you do. [Laughter] I know you do.

Every aspect of our culture, whether it be art or music to law and politics, owes something to the influence of Italian Americans. You can take special pride in the deep tradition of service to this country. People of Italian descent oftentimes hear the call to serve something greater than themselves. Twenty-four Italian Americans have won the Congressional Medal of Honor. That's high service to something greater than yourself.

One of them was Marine Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone. You may have heard of this brave man. He died in the battle of Iwo Jima. He won both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. It speaks to his valor and his service, but he wasn't alone. There's thousands who have sacrificed and served a country they love. Sure, they love their heritage, but most of all they love America and what America stands for.

Rocky Versace is an Italian American. He won the Medal of Honor in Vietnam because of the defiance he showed after being taken captive by the Viet Cong. I met his family